

Application No.: 10/796,837  
Amendments dated March 7, 2005  
Response

## **Amendments to the Claims**

### **Listing of Claims:**

Claims 1 – 6 (cancelled)

Claim 7 (currently amended): A lifting and transport strap assembly for lifting and transporting ~~bulky articles~~ a hot water heater having interconnected top, bottom, back and sidewalls, comprising:

(a) a main strap assembly for circumscribing at least a portion of the ~~bulky article~~ hot water heater, said main strap assembly comprising:

- (i) a generally semicircular-shaped, yieldably deformable main strap having spaced-apart extremities;
- (ii) a generally semicircular-shaped, plastic component connected to said main strap;
- (iii) a generally semicircular-shaped, yieldably deformable foam rubber inner component connected to said plastic component for frictionally gripping the sidewall of the hot water heater; and

## Amendments to the Claims continued

- (iv) first adjustment means for adjusting the length of said main strap to accommodate the hot water heater being lifted and transported.
- (b) gripping means affixed into said spaced-apart extremities of said main strap for gripping said main strap assembly, said gripping means comprising gripping rings;
- (c) first and second spaced-apart side straps connected to said main strap for engaging the ~~sides~~ side of the ~~bulky article~~ hot water heater, each said first and second side strap having an upper end portion and a lower end portion; and
- (d) A bottom strap spanning said first and second spaced-apart side straps for engaging the bottom of the ~~bulky article~~ hot water heater, said bottom strap being connected to said side straps proximate said lower end portions thereof.

Claim 8 (currently amended): The lifting and transport strap assembly as defined in claim 7 further including second adjustment means for adjusting the length of said side straps to accommodate the hot water heater being lifted and transported.

Claim 9 (canceled)

## **Amendments to the Claims continued**

Claim 10 (currently amended): The lifting and transport strap assembly as defined in claim 7 in which said gripping means comprises generally “D”-shaped gripping rings interconnected with said main strap and gripping handles adjustably interconnected with said gripping rings to enable angular positioning of said gripping rings relative to the hot water heater being lifted and transported.

Claim 11 (currently amended): A lifting and transport strap assembly for lifting and transporting a hot water heater having interconnected top, bottom, back and sidewalls, comprising:

(a) a main strap assembly for circumscribing at least a portion of the hot water heater, said main strap assembly comprising:

(i) a generally semicircular-shaped, yieldably deformable main strap having spaced-apart extremities;

(ii) a generally semicircular-shaped semi-rigid plastic component connected to said main strap and circumscribed thereby;

(iii) a generally semicircular-shaped, yieldably deformable foam rubber inner component connected to said plastic

## Amendments to the Claims continued

component for frictionally gripping the sides of the hot water heater; and

(iv) adjustment means for adjusting the length of said main strap to accommodate the hot water heater being lifted and transported.

(b) gripping means affixed into said spaced-apart extremities of said main strap for gripping said main strap assembly;

(c) first and second spaced-apart side straps connected to said main strap for engaging the sides of the hot water heater, each said first and second side strap having an upper end portion and a lower end portion; and

(d) a bottom strap spanning said first and second space-apart side straps for engaging the bottom of the hot water heater, said bottom strap being connected to said side straps proximate said lower end portions thereof and have a layer of foam rubber affixed thereto.

Claim 12 (original): The lifting and transport strap assembly as defined in claim 11 in which said gripping means comprises generally “D”-shaped gripping rings interconnected with said main strap and gripping handles adjustably interconnected with said gripping rings.

### **Amendments to the Claims continued**

Claim 13 (new): The lifting and transport assembly as defined in claim 12 in which said gripping means further comprises cylindrically-shaped handgrips connected to said generally “D”-shaped gripping rings.

Claim 14 (new): The lifting and transport assembly as defined in claim 13 in which said generally circular-shaped, yieldably deformable foam rubber inner component is about six inches in width.